



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2023

by N Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/23/3327640

25 High Beeches, Bexley, Sidcup, DA14 5LZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr L Bowles against the decision of London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 23/00770/FUL, dated 4 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion with dormer extension at the back.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues raised by this appeal are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the High Beeches Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

3. The High Beeches CA Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) identifies that the CA has a substantial number of unaltered buildings and this contributes to the architectural and historic value and characteristics of the locale and that this makes the area special, and worthy of CA status. This provides the CA a distinctive quality to both the character and appearance of the area and gives this area architectural significance. The appeal property falls within the CA and, therefore, forms part of its significance.
4. The CA Appraisal and Management Plan identifies alterations to roofscapes, including the installation of dormers, to pose a threat to the special character of the area.
5. The alteration to the roof from a hip to almost a full gable would substantially alter the appearance of this semi-detached property. I acknowledge that the other half of this semi has had its roof altered, albeit that development hosts a larger hipped element than that proposed here. Therefore, the proposal would not create roof forms of a visually balanced appearance in respect of this pair of semi-detached dwellings.
6. This semi-detached property forms part of a row of similar dwellings, none of which have had their roof forms altered from hip to gable other than that of the

adjoining semi. Given the roof design would not balance in appearance with that of the adjoining semi, it would not create symmetry to the appearance of the dwellings. The alterations to the roof would be out of keeping with the largely unaltered roofs in the area and to alter the roof in the manner proposed would be visually harmful to the appearance of the dwelling and the area generally. This would undermine the purposes of the CA designation that recognises the special characteristics of this area that form part of the attractive qualities of the environment that give it its significance.

7. Some of the properties close by host dormer roof extensions within their rear roof slopes. The CA Appraisal and Management Plan comments that the large flat roofed dormers along High Beeches are one of the main intrusions or negative features. The proposed roof dormer extension would be large and encompass most of the rear roof. This would introduce an additional negative feature within the CA and would be visually harmful for this reason. Although the visual harm may not be prominently visible in views from High Beeches, the visual harm of the development would be apparent to neighbouring residents to the rear of the appeal property.
8. There are properties along High Beeches that host front dormers and I have been directed to number 22 High Beeches that hosts both a front and rear dormer. The existence of other roof dormers does not overcome the harm I have identified resulting from the proposed development or provide justification for further visually harmful development within the CA.
9. Given the size and scale of the proposal in the CA, I consider there would be less than substantial harm to the character or appearance of the CA. In accordance with paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework), I must weigh the harm against the public benefits of the proposal. The proposal would provide additional living space within the property but this would be limited to providing a personal benefit for the appellant. There would be no clear benefit to the public that would sufficiently outweigh the harm identified. I conclude therefore that the proposed development would fail to accord with national policy.
10. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area and would neither preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the High Beeches CA. The proposal would, therefore conflict with Policy HC1 of the London Plan 2021, Policies SP5, SP6, DP11 and DP14 of the Bexley Local Plan 2023, the guidance given within the High Beeches CA Appraisal and Management Plan and the Framework. These policies and guidance seek, amongst other matters, development to achieve high quality design and to conserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets. The proposal also fails to conform with the objectives of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 (as amended).

Conclusion

11. Having regard to the above findings, the appeal should be dismissed.

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR